

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 281244

DAR ES SALAAM FOR AMBASSADOR MCHENRY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PDEV, WA

SUBJECT: ANGOLA AND CONTACT GROUP TRAVELS

REF: DAR ES SALAAM 4688

1. FOLLOWING IS INR ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION
IN ANGOLA FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

2. ALTHOUGH OUR INFORMATION ON ANGOLAN DEVELOPMENTS
IS SKETCHY, WE HAVE NOTHING TO INDICATE THAT THE
FAILURE TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO THE CONTACT
GROUP'S REQUEST TO VISIT LUANDA IS AIMED AT THE
CONTACT GROUP AS SUCH. ON THE BASIS OF WHAT WE NOW
KNOW, IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT THE ANGOLAN RESPONSE
IS DUE TO A GENERAL CLOSING OF FRONTIERS AND EMBARGO
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ON FOREIGN VISITORS THAT IS RELATED TO PREOCCUPATIONS
WITH (AND APPREHENSION CONCERNING) THE UPCOMING MPLA
PARTY CONGRESS.

3. THE MPLA PARTY CONGRESS, WHICH HAD BEEN EXPECTED
TO BEGIN EARLY THIS YEAR, HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY
POSTPONED BECAUSE OF INTERNAL PARTY PROBLEMS AND

AN UNSETTLED SECURITY SITUATION. ITS MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM CAME FROM WITHIN THE PARTY LAST MAY WHEN

A RADICAL FACTION STAGED AN UNSUCCESSFUL COUP ATTEMPT. THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT SUSPECTED SOVIET AND PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST INVOLVEMENT. ALTHOUGH THE COUP LEADERS WERE ARRESTED AND PRESUMABLY EXECUTED, THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO ARREST PEOPLE SUSPECTED OF BEING INVOLVED IN THE UPRISING.

3. ALTHOUGH AVAILABLE INTELLIGENCE REPORTING DOES NOT INDICATE ANY NEW ANTI-GOVERNMENT PLOT IN PREPARATION, OR THAT THE COUNTRY IS ON THE VERGE OF A NEW UPHEAVAL, IT DOES SUGGEST THAT DEEP DIVISIONS REMAIN WITHIN THE PARTY. THAT THE PARTY IS ATTEMPTING TO LIMIT OUTSIDE OBSERVATION AND INTERFERENCE IN PARTY AFFAIRS DURING THE CONGRESS, WHERE SUCH DIVISIONS COULD BE AIRED, APPEARS TO BE THE MOST PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR THE ENTRY RESTRICTIONS. MOREOVER, PARTY OFFICIALS, AND IN PARTICULAR NETO HIMSELF, MAY WANT TO BE FREE TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONGRESS WITHOUT BEING DRAWN INTO POSSIBLY CONTENTIOUS DEBATE INVOLVING FIVE MAJOR WESTERN POWERS, SWAPO AND, ON THE SIDELINES, SOVIET DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS.

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4. IT IS NOT APPARENT WHAT, IF ANYTHING, THE INSURGENT UNITA FORCES INTEND TO DO TO DISRUPT THE LUANDA PROCEEDINGS, BUT THE GOVERNMENT MAY FEAR SOME EMBARRASSING INCIDENT. INTELLIGENCE REPORTING DOES NOT SHOW ANY INCREASED EXTERNAL THREAT EMANATING EITHER FROM ZAIRE OR SOUTH AFRICA TO ACCOUNT FOR THE BORDER CLOSINGS.

5. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT THE NEW ENTRY REGULATIONS ARE AIMED AT THE US OR INTENDED AS AN ANGOLAN REACTION TO THE CONTACT GROUP. HOWEVER, THE RESTRICTIONS COULD PROVIDE A CONVENIENT EXCUSE FOR ELIMINATION OF A LUANDA STOP ON THIS ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS.

6. THE CONTACT GROUP'S DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING PERMISSION TO ENTER COULD BE READ AS AN ATTEMPT TO PRESS THE US TO ACQUIESCE IN A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. BUT A DELIBERATELY UNCOOPERATIVE ACT, PARTICULARLY ONE TAKEN FOR AN OSTENSIBLY UNRELATED PURPOSE, SEEMS AN UNLIKELY APPROACH.

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